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SUBJECT: NAMIBIA: OPPOSITION CONTESTS FINAL ELECTION RESULTS

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Summary

[1](#)1. (SBU) After six days of counting, tabulating, and verifying votes, the Electoral Commission of Namibia (ECN) issued its final results for the November 27-28 2009 Presidential and National Assembly (parliamentary) elections late on December 4. The ruling SWAPO party and the incumbent President Hifikepunye Pohamba won with an overwhelming majority of the votes 75 and 76 percent respectively. These percentages precisely mirror SWAPO's results of 2004. The Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), which was formed in 2007 by some breakaway senior members of SWAPO, won 11 percent of the vote and will become the official opposition. The RDP claims that ECN manipulated the election results. Nine opposition parties have joined the RDP in taking the ECN to court to contest the results. Turnout nationwide was a bit lower than in 2004, but there is wide variability in turnout figures across constituencies and regions. Many SWAPO strongholds actually saw sizable increases in turnout, while areas where SWAPO is less popular saw decreases. The President and the new National Assembly will be sworn in on March 21, 2010. End Summary.

Presidential Election Results

[1](#)2. (SBU) The incumbent President Hifikepunye Pohamba, of the ruling SWAPO party, won with an overwhelming majority of the votes (76.4 percent). Coincidentally, this percentage mirrors precisely his tally in 2004. Hidipo Hamutenya of the Rally for Democracy and Progress (RDP), Pohamba's chief rival, garnered 11 percent of the vote. No other candidate received more than three percent.

2009 Presidential Election Results

Party	Candidate	Votes	Percent
SWAPO	Pohamba	611,241	76.4%
RDP	Hamutenya	88,640	11.0%
DTA	Kaura	24,186	3.0%
NUDO	Riruako	23,735	2.9%
UDF	Garoeb	19,258	2.4%
APP	Shixwameni	9,981	1.3%
RP	Mudge	9,425	1.2%
COD	Ulenga	5,812	0.7%
SWANU	Maamberua	2,968	0.4%
DPN	Isaacs	1,859	0.2%
NMDC	Goagoseb	1,760	0.2%
CP	Beukes	1,005	0.1%
Total		799,870	

National Assembly Election Results

13. (SBU) SWAPO received 75 percent of the vote for the National Assembly, also matching its tally of 2004. RDP picked up 11 percent of the National Assembly votes making it the new official opposition party, taking the mantle away from the Congress of Democrats (CoD). The CoD finished eighth amongst the 14 parties that contested for the National Assembly. Given that SWAPO's winning percentage was unchanged, the RDP's success at the polls appears to have come at the expense of the traditional opposition parties.

2009 National Assembly Election Results

Party	Votes	Percent
SWAPO	602,580	75.3%
RDP	90,556	11.3%
DTA	25,393	3.1%
NUDO	24,422	3.0%
UDF	19,489	2.4%
APP	10,795	1.4%
RP	6,541	0.8%
COD	5,375	0.7%
SWANU	4,989	0.6%
MAG	4,718	0.6%
DPN	1,942	0.2%
NDMC	1,770	0.2%
NDP	1,187	0.2%

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CP	810	0.1%
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Total	800,567	

National Assembly Seat Allocation

14. (SBU) Despite its strong showing, due to the formula that dictates how seats in the National Assembly are allocated, SWAPO will actually have one less seat (54 instead of 55) in the parliament. Nevertheless, it will retain its two-thirds majority. The RDP and APP will enter Parliament for the first time with eight and one seats respectively. The COD will lose four of its five seats (only retaining one seat). The United Democratic Front (UDF) and Namibian Unity Democratic Organization (NUDO) had three seats in the National Assembly, but both lost a seat and will be down to two members of parliament each come March 2010. The Democratic Turnhalle Alliance (DTA), the dominant opposition party at Namibia's independence, which has four seats in the current National Assembly, continued its decline and will lose half of its representation in the next National Assembly. The Monitor Action Group (MAG) which had one seat in the National Assembly, will be absent from the next parliament. The South West Africa National Union (SWANU) party, one of Namibia's oldest political parties, picked up a seat although it only registered 0.45 percent of the vote.

New National Assembly Seats

Party	2004	2009	Loss/Gain
APP	X	1	1
COD	5	1	-4
DTA	4	2	-2
MAG	1	0	-1
NUDO	3	2	-1
RDP	X	8	8
RP	1	1	0
SWANU	0	1	1

SWAPO	55	54	-1
UDF	3	2	-1
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Total	72	72	

Women will only make up 22 percent of the seats in the new National Assembly, down from 33 percent. This falls well below the Southern Africa Development Community (SADC) goal of 50 percent. This percentage could change, however, depending on whom the President selects to fill 6 non-voting parliamentary seats.

Party Performance Around the Country

15. (SBU) SWAPO performed well across the country. SWAPO beat all the other parties in every region and won 50 percent or more of the vote in 10 out of the 13 regions. Only in Omaheke, Hardap, and Kunene regions did SWAPO not win an absolute majority. In those regions, NUDO and UDF - parties that have historically seen regional but not national support - performed well as expected. SWAPO polled 90 percent or better in Oshikoto, Oshana, Ohangwena and Omusati regions. In Omusati, SWAPO garnered 97.3 percent of the vote. RDP was not able to make significant in-roads into these four regions which is the heartland of the Owambo, Namibia's largest ethnic group. The Owambo people are considered SWAPO's strongest base of support. Hidipo Hamutenya, RDP's candidate for President, previously a senior SWAPO official, is himself Owambo (Ovakwanyama clan, the same as President Pohamba), so RDP supporters had hoped their party would do well in "Owamboland."

Opposition Protesting the Results

16. (SBU) All but three opposition parties have joined in a movement to contest the election results and are taking the ECN to court. The unusually long time it took the ECN to count and verify the votes (over six days rather than the normal four) has led opposition parties to suspect there was some form of manipulation of the election results. RDP senior official Libolly Haufiku told the Ambassador that the joint opposition case would be heard by the High Court on December 11. Haufiku claims that the RDP has proof and witnesses that can testify to massive rigging at election verification centers (where polling stations take their results after

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counting) and during subsequent audits. Opposition parties will hold peaceful demonstrations throughout the country on December 11, Haufiku asserted.

Voter Turnout

17. (SBU) Voter turnout was down by 2.3 percent nationwide, with sizable declines in eight of Namibia's 13 regions. However, in the SWAPO strongholds of Oshikoto, Oshana, Ohangwena and Omusati turnout increased sharply, a total of over 38,000 votes. SWAPO actually received over 17,300 less votes than in 2004, but because of lower turnout nationwide, its performance (percentage-wise) remained the same.

Comment

18. (SBU) Opposition parties may point to the much higher vote counts in SWAPO strongholds as evidence of election manipulation. Rumors are that SWAPO may have paid and registered Angolans to vote on its behalf in Oshikoto,

Oshana, Ohangwena and Omusati regions. Although a few Angolans were found with voter identification cards prior to the elections, and some voters could have voted twice due to some irregularities, it is not clear whether these issues will form part of the opposition's court case. Since Namibia allows people to cast their votes anywhere in the nation, it is conceivable to have large swings in voting patterns. Furthermore, some increases in turnout could be explained by shifts in demographics in certain regions and constituencies.

Nevertheless, the differences in voter turnout may receive closer analytical scrutiny.

19. (SBU) Post had 16 people observe polling stations in six regions on November 27-28. From our observation, voting took place in a peaceful environment. While we noticed some irregularities during the voting, we do not know the magnitude of the occurrences. Certainly there was some intimidation in the lead up to the elections, and there was not a level playing field with regard to access to the media.

While regional bodies such as SADC and the African Union (AU) were quick to call the elections free, fair and transparent, we now have to wait and see what information opposition parties present to the courts. Hopefully the courts will reach a quick decision before Namibia heads into its traditional "Festive Season," when most of the country shuts down from December 15 to January 15. End Comment.

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